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SouthCumberlandCommunityFund.org

Continued from page 9

Four creative projects, conceived and proposed by young people in our communities, were awarded \$1,000 grants by SCCF in late October. The *Make A Difference* project invited youth to submit their ideas. Projects were submitted in three age groups: grades K-4, 5-8, and 9-12. Students came up with more than two dozen creative ideas. We had online voting and more than 600 people participated.

Every student participating in a project received a specially designed SCCF/Make A Difference t-shirt, and each winning group was recognized at their school with the award of a big “check” designed for the project.

Capacity Building Director Nicky Hamilton with Make A Difference winners.



Our Home. Our Mountain. Our Future.



2015 ANNUAL REPORT

Dear
Friends,

SOUTH CUMBERLAND COMMUNITY FUND had a very busy 2015, with some significant transitions. In 2015, SCCF made grants of more than \$100,000 to nonprofit organizations on the Plateau working to create opportunities for young people, building new community spaces, and expanding local support services for residents. Among the grants are community gardens, audio-visual systems for schools, and accessible playgrounds. In addition, schoolchildren from across the Mountain submitted their own proposals about how they would “Make a Difference” in their community; we awarded \$4,000 to four terrific projects conceived by these young people. We have provided technical assistance to our community partners and offered workshops on strengthening their organizations. And we hired an Executive Director who is bringing a new level of professionalism and experience to our work.



Learning about nature in the Sewanee Children's Center new garden.

Please read about SCCF’s 2015 in these pages. I hope you will see what an impact your gifts and support have made in our community. We look forward to an exciting future together.

—Margaret Woods, *Board Chair*

OUR MISSION & VISION

The South Cumberland Community Fund improves the quality of life across the South Cumberland plateau of Tennessee, which includes Grundy County and portions of Marion and Franklin Counties, by increasing philanthropic giving and providing community leadership to build on the strength of the area’s people, communities and natural setting, to

enhance community capacity and collaboration, and support innovative ways to solve community problems.

The SCCF envisions that the South Cumberland plateau be a place of hope and prosperity for all its residents and communities, inspired by the Fund’s philanthropic and regional leadership.



FROM *the* EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

GREETINGS from the Plateau! It is an honor to work with so many people who are passionate about our community; SCCF has engaged people from all across our Mountain to work together for good.

Thank you to all the donors who have helped make this possible. Thank you to all the community partners who run terrific programs. And thank you to all of the people who have supported the Fund's work since its inception. I look forward to 2016 when I get to meet all of you, hear your story, and learn more about how we can work together.

—Laura Willis,
Executive Director

INTRODUCTION *to the* FUND PROGRAM

SCCF: OUR HOME. OUR MOUNTAIN. OUR FUTURE.

OUR HOME

Some of us have been on this Mountain for generations. Some of us are newcomers. But we are all here for a purpose. It is a place that has a rich, storied heritage, a place where we respect those who have come before us, and a place that honors its past while it looks ahead. Because it is our home, we are patient with its inconsistencies and frustrations. Because it is our home, SCCF is dedicated to making it a place where generations can continue to flourish.

OUR MOUNTAIN

While we call this a "mountain," no geographer would agree, preferring our other reference to it as a plateau. But it is our Mountain. It is a place you have to climb to get to: it is 1,000 feet above the valley below, at the southern end of the Cumberland Plateau. The Mountain has given us our livelihoods in a variety of ways beginning

with coal mining, to timber and logging, to agriculture, to tourism. SCCF revels in the Mountain's beauty by preserving it in a series of state parks and protected areas; we honor our elders by safeguarding the past.

OUR FUTURE

Tomorrow will be here very soon. We learn from our past and we dream about our future. We want our children to love this place as much as we do, as much as so many have for generations. We want to capture the stories that anchor us here. We want to honor the people who sacrificed and saved to make this such a beautiful place. We want to ensure that our children and grandchildren have healthy lives, receive a strong education, and look to a glorious future. SCCF partners with organizations across the Plateau to look to the future; we honor our elders by safeguarding the past.

With passion, commitment, and hard work, VISTAs create or expand programs designed to bring individuals and communities out of poverty. During their service, VISTAs focus on building the organizational, administrative, and financial capacity of organizations that fight illiteracy, improve health services, foster economic development, and otherwise assist low-income communities.

GRANT PROGRAMS

MOUNTAIN HERITAGE PRESERVATION SOCIETY was established to educate the community, especially its children, about the unique cultural heritage they inherit from growing up on the Cumberland Plateau. The hope is that people will be strengthened by an understanding of and loyalty to that heritage. The Preservation Society is best known for the annual Mountaineer's Day Festival, but the organization is broadly committed to advancing the welfare of our mountain communities. This grant of \$10,000 will enable the Society to partner with the local baseball/softball organization in the construction of batting cages at the current ballfield in Tracy City. That organization has renewed energy and stability from growth over the last four years, and seeks further upgrades and expansion of the facilities in coming years.

THE GRUNDY COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE, with the assistance of this \$9,500 grant, will construct a greenhouse and raised garden beds. Inmates, jail administrators, youth probationers, and the community will maintain the garden and greenhouse, and food grown there will feed the inmates and be shared with the community. Taking care of the mini-farm will be a daily chore for inmates, who will receive training from community partners in planting and storing food. This new facility will provide a source of pride, a productive learning experience tied to family security and employment opportunities, and a positive connection that will build community support for inmates when they are released.

MIRACLE ON THE MOUNTAIN PLAY OUTSIDE PARK (MOMPOP) is a one-year old organization

formed to create a major public recreation area for people of all ages with special emphasis on children with special needs in Grundy and surrounding counties. The park will be constructed on 14 acres of land leased from the County and located across Highway 108 from the high school. MOMPOP is an extraordinary and ambitious project for our region. It will be built in phases. This grant of \$10,000 will be applied to the \$51,900 cost of Phase I, which will include parking and roadway access, restrooms and a concession stand, an amphitheater, and paved pathways to make the entire area ADA compliant.

THE GRUNDY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY library and research center holds approximately 1,600 books, photographs albums, and newsletters, as well as thousands of loose historical doc-

Officials of the 2015 grant recipient organizations at the awards reception in August.



THE COMMUNITY FUND became aware of a plan to create a plateau-wide children's choir to perform traditional Appalachian folk and gospel songs at the annual Trails & Trilliums spring festival produced by the Friends of South Cumberland State Park. This project seemed a perfect fit for the Paul S. McConnell Music Grant of \$3,500, awarded to the Community Fund to support music programs in our region. The Board reached out to the Friends group to offer support for the choir project. The presentation by 130 children in grades 4–8 from five elementary schools was the highlight of the Trails & Trilliums event. The hope is that the choir will become an annual program.

uments that date as far back as the 1840s, including volumes of records pertaining to the coal, iron/steel, and railroad industries of the region. This grant of \$7,406.05 will enable the Historical Society to purchase library software to identify, organize, and improve public access to its holdings. In addition, the grant will support the temporary employment of a professional librarian to implement the project and train voluntary staff in managing the Society's records and special collections in the future.

MOUNTAIN T.O.P. is a 40-year old interdenominational ministry dedicated to addressing issues of poverty in our rural Cumberland region. The organization has drawn upon a culture of faith-based social commitment to recruit individuals, families, and church groups to work on projects that meet social, emotional, physical, and spiritual needs. The projects are usually organized around repair of homes and the operation of day camps for children and youth on the Plateau. The Adventure Guild in Chattanooga has assisted Moun-

tain T.O.P. in the construction and operation of two challenge courses (a low- and a high-ropes course) on the Altamont campris. TAG has now gifted the courses to Mountain T.O.P., and with this grant of \$8,009, the organization will purchase equipment and training for its staff members for the ongoing operation of the program. It is expected that the new arrangement will be more economically efficient and enable Mountain T.O.P. to recruit additional retreat groups that are attracted to the area's exceptional wilderness hiking and camping resources.

PALMER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, one of seven public elementary schools in Grundy County, was built in 1927. It is one of only two schools with both a gymnasium and an auditorium. This grant of \$1,600 will enable the school to replace its 15-year-old PA system with blue-tooth and wireless technology to serve both venues. The school has over 75 events (sports, spelling bees, Christmas plays, etc.) during the year, not counting daily assemblies. The completion of the two thousand dollar project will be enabled by additional investments by the town and the school, plus local business and individual contributors.

THE CITY OF COALMONT, thanks to a group of volunteers led by Jeff Sholey working in partnership with county government and the



South Cumberland Community Fund, now enjoys a public park on the shore of Big Creek Lake. The park was built in 2013 on county-owned land that had not been developed or maintained for recreational uses. The subsequent popularity of the park for families in the area has led to plans to add a 4,000-foot gravel walking trail. This grant of \$10,000 will support the construction of the trail, which is expected to increase community access to safe areas for healthy exercise.

THE SEWANEE CHILDREN'S CENTER is a preschool operated by a parents' cooperative to provide early learning experiences in a full-day program to children ages two to five. The Center also provides afterschool care for preschoolers and children through eight years of age. Under the leadership of new director Harriet Runkle, the SCC has planned a school/community garden to serve as an outdoor classroom to teach students gardening skills, healthy eating habits, life cycles of plants and animals, and good stewardship of natural resources. Produce will be shared with the Community Action Center and used for special events at Otey Parish. This grant of \$9,587 will enable the construction of the 40' by 60' garden, including a deer-proof fence, the need for which requires no explanation to anyone who lives in our area.

THE CITY OF PALMER is blessed with a town center where a public park, a museum of mining, the seat of government, and the public school are all in close proximity. The park has multiple features, including ball fields and a walking trail, but it lacks a basic and essential element, namely a restroom. In cooperation with the Conservation Committee of Grundy County and with the support of this \$10,000 grant, the community of Palmer will construct an ADA accessible restroom to serve the park patrons, especially families for whom such facilities are expected and necessary for extended use of the park.

SEWANEE COMMUNITY CHEST, organized by the long-standing Sewanee Civic Association, has raised a million dollars in the last decade to support local organizations serving the public good. During



its storied history, the SCA has advanced the welfare of the unincorporated community of Sewanee and the region around it through initiatives as diverse as building the public elementary school, completing a state highway to the Marion County line, and raising money for a community center. The Parks Committee of SCA has proposed to restore Elliott Park on the campus of the University at a cost of \$70,000. The park, open to the public, as a rich assortment of features to promote physical adventures by children. The Community Chest will raise the funds as a special project; this grant of \$10,000 will be applied to the overall cost of the park.

NORTH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, operating under the auspices of the Grundy County Board of Education, is working to make its gymnasium a more effective venue for multi-media presentations, programs, assemblies, and sporting events. Lacking an auditorium, the gymnasium is the only setting for a large variety of school-related and community presentations. The configuration of the gym with side seating makes it difficult for the audience to see and hear many such programs. With this grant of \$10,000 the school will purchase two automated projection screens, two wireless projectors, and the hardware to operate them. In addition, new microphones and speakers will be purchased to upgrade the school's PA system.

A FEW WORDS *from* GRANT RECIPIENTS

GRUNDY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
 “Since the announcement of your award to the Grundy County Historical Society (GCHS), there has been an increase of visitors to the GCHS Heritage Center. Inside the library, they want reference services regarding family histories, communities or landmarks locations and guidance in basic research. It is great to hear the palpable excitement in their voices when personal discoveries are made. And what is significant to me are most visitors bring their children or grandchildren.

“Because of the SCCF grant, we have seen an improvement in diversity—we have an intergenerational working environment. The Traditionals continue to engage visitors with their knowledge of the South Cumberland Region and they share life experiences and their culture on the mountain with younger volunteers. Generation Y volunteers have provided energy and tremendous technology support to others. And together they share their technical and professional expertise with one another to sustain the library records management project funded by SCCF. Our organization realizes that each generation brings wonderful strengths to the workplace and we are learning from the strengths of others as well.”

—Oliver Jervis

SEWANEE CHILDREN'S CENTER

“The SCCF's grant for our garden has resulted in a heightened sense of community and collaboration among Sewanee Children's Center, Community Action Committee, and Otey Parish. All have been included in the planning and implementation of the garden. Also, our teachers are finding more and more ways to incorporate plants and gardening into their classroom curriculums and have exciting plans for what they will plant once we begin the season.”

—Harriet Runkle



Community children play at the new Elliott Park in Sewanee.

MOUNTAIN HERITAGE PRESERVATION SOCIETY

“Everyone loves the batting cages and like we hoped more people have been volunteering and helping since they see positive things being done.”

—Brandon Parson

PALMER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

“We used the new PA system at our school spelling bee and during the county spelling bee. We thank you for the grant money. The PA system makes our events at our school enjoyable and we want everyone to enjoy them. The PA system makes it stand out and easy to understand everything that's being said on our stage.”

—Lisa Magouirk



Jack Murrain with Madeline Adams.

It is great to hear the palpable excitement in the voices [of visitors to the GCHS Heritage Center] when personal discoveries are made. And what is significant to me is most visitors bring their children or grandchildren with them to the Heritage Center.
 —Oliver Jervis, Grundy County Historical Society



A winner of the Make A Difference campaign.

SEWANEE CIVIC ASSOCIATION

“The community played a major role in the getting the playground open. We had three key successful components: a community-wide bake sale; our partnership with the University of the South where they would do the site preparation; and the final

getting the park ready to open where more than 70 people helped to move and spread mulch so the park could be operable and safe.”

—Kiki Beavers

NORTH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

“The AV equipment has allowed our PE coach to use an online exercise program for children called GoNoodle. The students love it and they use the program throughout the day. The parents who have seen the AV equipment in use think it is great. One of the big complaints voiced in parent surveys has been the fact that it was impossible to hear what was being said in the gym. We are really looking forward to using the equipment for the 8th grade promotions in which we do a slide show. It will be so much better this year on our big screen.”

—Renee Corley

CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM

Strengthening our community partners in their ability to succeed at their missions, sharing information and teaching best practices, learning board development and strategic planning, and developing relationships with key leaders. These are all part of the Capacity Building program of SCCF. This work takes shape in a number of different ways...

AmeriCorps VISTA

In partnership with the Office of Community Engagement at the University of the South in Sewanee, SCCF is sponsoring The South Cumberland Plateau AmeriCorps VISTA program. This federal program provides assistance in the nation's poorest communities. With passion, commitment, and hard work, VISTAs create or expand programs designed to bring individuals and communities out of poverty. By the design of the

program, VISTAs generally do not provide direct services (such as tutoring children or building homes) but focus on building the organizational, administrative,

South Cumberland Plateau AmeriCorps VISTA Project volunteers with Grundy County Mayor Michael Bray on the 2015 Mayor's Day of Recognition for National Service.





Julie Keel and Cameron Swallow.

and financial capacity of organizations that fight illiteracy, improve health services, foster economic development, and otherwise assist low-income communities. VISTAs develop programs to meet a need, write grants, and recruit and train volunteers.

In 2015, nine VISTAs were assigned to the following locations:

Babson Center for Global Commerce

The Economic Development Coordinator collaborated with the Grundy County Mayor's Office to establish an economic development plan to produce increased job opportunities for low income individuals.

Discover Together

The Community Ambassador Coordinator worked to develop a network of trained volunteers to better engage families in the community.

Grundy County Health Council

The School Health Activities Coordinator expanded and strengthened Grundy County Health Council's ability to affect health of low-income students in Grundy County schools through development of activity and tobacco prevention and cessation programs in the schools and local youth groups.

The Health Network Coordinator worked to expand and strengthen the ability of the Health Council to partner with local health care social

service agencies, and churches to develop a communitywide health information, education network as a means of improving the health of the county's residents.

Grundy County Mayor's Office

The Economic Development Coordinator collaborated with the Babson Center for Global Commerce to establish an economic development plan to produce increased job opportunities for low income individuals.

Mountain T.O.P.

The Communications and Assessment Coordinator developed a volunteer networking and communication system in Mountain T.O.P.'s service area in support of its programs, determining community needs, and assessing results of program offerings.

The Weatherization Network Coordinator expanded and strengthened the ability of Mountain T.O.P. to partner with, and serve more, low-income people in its housing repair program, better assess low-income family needs, and better assess program services designed to improve clients' overall economic wellbeing.

South Cumberland Community Fund

The Grant Writing Coordinator provided grant writing and nonprofit management support to the nonprofit organizations on the South Cumberland Plateau that serve low-income individuals and families to develop their capacity to fulfill their missions of producing healthy futures, economic well-being, and educational preparedness.

Sewanee Dining

The Hunger Relief and Reading and Literacy Coordinator organized the first year of the USDA-sponsored South Cumberland Summer Meal Program and provided organizational capacity for the Grundy County Food Bank.

Additional VISTAs joined the team in 2016 to expand the scope and depth of the program.

Other Activities

In June, the South Cumberland Summer Meal Program partnered with 21 organizations in Franklin and Grundy counties to serve more than 8,000 meals to over 900 children and teens.

The Capacity Building program funded strategic planning processes for Mountain T.O.P. and Folks at Home, facilitated by the Center for Non-Profit Management (CNM) in Nashville. Both of these continued into 2016.

CNM also offered workshops to area nonprofit organizations and in Nashville. Topics covered included strategic planning, Telling your Organization's Story, Grant Writing, Volunteer Management and Facebook Fundraising Workshops, supported by the Dan and Margaret Maddox Charitable Fund of Nashville. Working with CNM, SCCF began creation of a program through which local nonprofit leaders (staff, board members and volunteers) can acquire a certificate in nonprofit leadership from CNM. With a cadre of trained nonprofit leaders, the plateau will be less dependent on outside expertise to provide professional development opportunities.

The certificate program and these workshops will continue in 2016.

In partnership with the Office of Community Engagement and the Collaborative on Southern Appalachian and Place-Based Studies at the University of the South, SCCF hosted a planning workshop for a possible Reading Initiative for the Grundy County School system. Approximately 25 people attended, including the Director of K-6, staff from Head Start, principals, teachers, parents, librarians, professors from Sewanee, Yale, Discover Together, and community members.

Arvind Singhal, a renowned leader in Communication and Social Change gave a two-day workshop in Sewanee for 44 leaders representing local organizations on Positive Deviance Theory and Liberating Structures. Community leaders continue to meet every six weeks to practice Liberating Structures—easy-to-learn facilitation techniques to foster lively participation in groups regardless of its size. *Continues on page 12...*

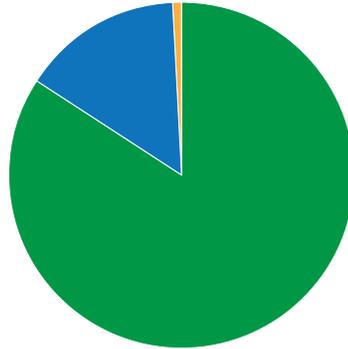
Arvind Singhal teaches local nonprofit leaders new ways of communicating.



2015 FINANCIALS

2015 SCCF INCOME

Individual Gifts:	\$196,209
Foundation Grants:	\$35,000
Other Revenue:	\$1,903
	<u>\$233,112</u>



2015 SCCF EXPENDITURES

Grants to Organizations:	\$109,602
Capacity Building:	\$55,000
Development:	\$27,756
Marketing:	\$11,763
Miscellaneous:	\$6,625
Administrative:	\$5,921
Fees & Account Admin:	\$1,960
Printing:	\$1,914
	<u>\$220,541</u>

ENDOWMENT FUND VALUE

December 31, 2015: **\$264,497**

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